

though, that the Łupienko book is written entirely from a Polish standpoint. The author has used no Russian memoirs or diaries; he would not tell us where, and how, the local Russians dwelled: all those officials and clerks, military-men, entrepreneurs, as well as the poorer populace – those who drove down to Warsaw to seek employment there. What was the percentage of Russian tenement house owners locally, and in what ways could this minority influence the functioning of such houses? Jews, who formed 30 per cent of the city's population, appear just on the margin of the narrative. Warsaw was an ethnic and religious conglomerate; its quarters were quite diverse. Yet, the book would not give us much opportunity to look into such specificity.

I do appreciate that the author's intent was to show that Warsaw and its tenement house developments resembled the built-up areas in West European cities: this is expressly stated in the book. Still, the capital of the Kingdom of Poland, and the 'third capital' of the Russian Empire, remained peculiar: it was Europe's only city with a population of around one million without a municipal government and with no well-knit housing policy. Warsaw abounded with incredible housing contrasts, with zones of luxury neighbouring on areas of extreme poverty – and it would not be describable as a 'Paris of the North', contrary to what its residents would be willing to boast.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Warsaw was a city for which, on the eve of the panicked escape of the Russians in 1915, European-style modernisation solutions were sought. If implemented, Warsaw (who knows?) might have even turned into a 'Paris of the North'.<sup>7</sup>

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

*Agnieszka Zabłocka-Kos*

James Bjork, Tomasz Kamusella, Tim Wilson, and Anna Novikov (eds.), *Creating Nationality in Central Europe, 1880–1950. Modernity, violence and (be)longing in Upper Silesia*, Routledge, London and New York, 2016, 236 + xvi pp.

The books dealing with the history of Upper Silesia can be generally categorised into those related to identity and Polish-German conflict, on the one hand, and all the rest, on the other. The book in question definitely belongs to the former category but is different from most of what has been written

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<sup>6</sup> Błażej Brzostek, *Paryże innej Europy. Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX–XX wiek* (Warszawa, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> For an urban modernisation project for Warsaw, drafted in 1906 by Antoni Lange, a Jewish philosopher and intellectual, cf. Barbara Arciszewska and Makary Górzyński, 'Urban Narratives in the Age of Revolutions: Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Ideas to Modernize Warsaw', *Artium Quaestiones*, 2016, 101–48.

on the topic, in Polish or in German, especially in the twentieth century. The authors' underlying assumption is thus described by Pieter M. Judson in the foreword: "If we continue to use the categories constructed for us over a century ago by nationalist activists, and repeatedly refined during the twentieth century by their self-proclaimed scientific successors, we will only repeat stories that fail to engage what the sources tell us." (p. xiii) Hence, the book discusses the issues of identity and nationalism in modern Upper Silesia, processed consistently as the object of study rather than assumed as a research perspective. This, alone, makes the study worth mentioning among the many works dealing with the subject-matter.

*Creating Nationality* ... consists of nine articles by different authors, with a foreword and a brief editorial introduction. The authors are mostly British or American university-based historiographers; most of them have important studies in aspects of Upper Silesian history published recently to their credit.<sup>1</sup> Some of the essays now published as part of the book recapitulate or follow up the authors' larger research projects. This is of no detriment since these particular essays neatly fit the publication's framework. Moreover, some of the texts open the yet-unstudied research areas, which adds value to the book.

The article by Tomasz Kamusella can be regarded as an extensive introduction to the book. Its second section offers a broad discussion of the existing literature on the problem of identity/nationalism in Upper Silesia. A list of reference publications (in Polish, German, Czech, and English) is attached. The preceding section pretty convincingly argues for recognition, in equality and subjectivity research, of non-national forms of identity. Significantly enough, these forms tend to be regarded from the standpoint of national identities as second-rate or less perfect compared to national identity (the discourse accordingly refers to a 'lack' of/'un(der)developed' national identity). Yet, as Kamusella observes, one should rather reject the teleological and evaluation-oriented perspective, replacing it with an identical approach to group identification. This assumption is fairly consistently followed by the other authors (with a varied effect).

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<sup>1</sup> James Bjork, *Neither German, nor Pole. Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland, 1890–1922* (Ann Arbor, 2008); Tomasz Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalism. The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918* (West Lafayette, IN, 2007); Anna Novikov, *Shades of a Nation. The Dynamics of Belonging among the Silesian and Jewish populations in Easter Upper Silesia (1922–1934)* (Osnabrück, 2015); Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles. Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War* (Oxford, 2013); Kai Struve (ed.), *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Erinnerung* (Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, 19, Marburg, 2003); Timothy Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence. Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918–1922* (Oxford, 2010).

Tim Wilson's 'Fatal Violence in Upper Silesia, 1918–1922' is of special value for research into the history of Polish-German conflict after the First World War. The author has successfully compiled the calendar of the conflict month by month and calculated, *sine ira et studio*, all the Polish and German fatal victims as for November 1918 to July 1922. An apparently banal facts-related summary report has so far been absent in the otherwise extensive literature on the Silesian Uprisings; each of the parties to the dispute has tended to overrate their own losses whilst not quoting or underrating the losses inflicted to the other party. Wilson's estimate of the fatalities for Upper Silesia is in excess of 2,850 (of which over 60% fell on the Third Uprising, in May to June 1921), which, regarding the author's arguments and the current state of research should be considered a rather credible figure.

Allison Rodriguez's essay "'Scoundrels" and desperate mothers. Gendering German and Polish propaganda in the Upper Silesian plebiscite, 1919–1921' is somewhat disappointing, for a change. The main reason is that a half of it, instead of the plebiscite propaganda, deals with the history behind the plebiscite in Silesia that resulted from international agreements; the analysis of the propaganda itself is, perforce, short and rather superfluous. The statements about the Polish propaganda being more aggressive, with frequent references to the ideas of female and male roles, sound interesting but would perhaps require being evidenced at more length. There is no reference made to Władysław Zieliński's not the most recent but factually important study *Polska i niemiecka propaganda plebiscytowa na Górnym Śląsku* [The Polish and German plebiscite propaganda in Upper Silesia] (let us note that T. Kamusella does include the item in his reference list).

James Bjork analyses, in an interesting and mostly convincing manner, the phenomenon of bilingualism or diglossia, which – as tends to be the case with borderland regions – was pretty common in Upper Silesia until the end of the Second World War. Most of the region's inhabitants, similarly to the local Catholic elite associated with the Zentrum party, approached this situation in clearly pragmatic, rather than ideological, terms, which annoyed the (Polish and German) nationalists and on the other hand became one of the reasons of the failure of the plans to establish after the First World War a bilingual 'Free Upper Silesian State'.

The same pragmatic approach and 'national ambiguity' led to the fiasco of Polish minority education system in the German area of the region that was divided in 1922, as vividly described by Brendan Karch in 'Polish nationalism and national ambiguity in Weimar Upper Silesia'. The essay very efficiently combines the progressing radicalisation of the Polish national elite in interwar Germany and the milieu's deepening frustration in face of the peculiar Upper-Silesian pragmatism. Karch aptly observes that, in contrast to a majority of Silesian-speaking Upper-Silesians, "in their logic, nationality was not a choice, but an obligation – a duty to God and fatherland" (p. 157).

The school system in the context of national identity and state policies, on the other side of the 1922 frontier, is discussed by Anna Novikov ('Creating a citizen. Politics and the education system in the post-plebiscite Silesian Voivodeship'). Her analysis of the syllabuses, particularly in History, with international politics at the background, regrettably ends with the mid-1920s, instead of having consistently outlined the situation until 1939.

The subsequent two essays deal with the years of the Second World War and shortly afterwards. In his 'Upper Silesia in the age of ethnically homogenous nation-state, 1939–1949', Hugo Service concisely and approachably explains the assumptions and the implementation of the ethnic policy pursued by the Third Reich and, subsequently, the Polish communist authorities (till 1949). While this is a very good and pretty straightforward exposition of the problem in English, it is, perforce, reproductive (worth recommending in this context is John Kulczycki's *Belonging to the Nation. Inclusion and Exclusion in the Polish-German Borderlands, 1939–1951* [Cambridge, MA, 2016]). Peter Polak-Springer's article 'The Nazi "recovered territories" myth in the eastern Upper Silesian borderland, 1939–1945' touches upon a rather underinvestigated question, employing an extensive source-based query. His focus is on the ways in which the Nazi Germany evoked a vision of unquestionable German nature of the Silesian area annexed in 1939 to the Reich, along with the *Heimat* tradition. The purpose was to (re)integrate the region and to render a majority of the local Slavic population convinced of the area's Germanness. As we read, "there were bards, artists and scholars" in Upper Silesia "who worked to romanticize the Reich's politics of unabated expansion, violence and mass murder" (p. 179). The concluding chapter is a comparative study by Kai Struve, concisely and coherently showing a parallel development of the Polish and German memory of the Silesian Uprisings and the plebiscite (1919–22).

As to the weak points of the study, the time range given in the subtitle, 1880–1950, is rather misleading, especially the former date. Apart from the essays by Bjork and Kamusella, all the other authors deal, clearly, with the realities after the First World War. Kamusella's 'Upper Silesia in Modern Central Europe' proposes not clear-cut *post quem* caesura and quite unrestrainedly penetrates deep into the nineteenth century, mainly through contextual references to twentieth-century history. Hugo Service takes the reader up to the year 1949, while Kai Struve's narrative of the memory of the Uprisings and the plebiscite brings us, virtually, to the present day. Those who would expect an in-depth analysis of the notion of modernity (mentioned in the subtitle, after all) in Upper Silesia will be disappointed. While the major institutions of modernity – nation-state and its agencies, such as schools and propaganda – are central to the argument proposed by the authors, modernity is approached as an obvious notion. In fact, with respect to Upper Silesia, modernity had a peculiarity to it – in terms of identity issues as well

as with respect to a dynamism of modernity and coexistence of modern and traditional aspects. Misspelled or misprinted names of Silesian towns or persons (as in the last sections of Tim Wilson's essay or in Anna Novikov) is a minor and secondary problem.

No critical remarks with respect to the book under review can, however, undermine its importance as an academic study that elaborates upon several questions being key to the twentieth-century history of Upper Silesia. The topics researched by the various authors are apparently interrelated, and the essays engage in a conversation with one another – a satisfactory experience with a multi-author publication. The book may outright be read as a lecture on the history of Upper Silesia in the former half of the twentieth century, identity being axial to the narrative. Thus, the importance of this book far exceeds the confines of Upper Silesian history, showing the latter as an important phenomenon in the twentieth-century European history overall.

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### Some Findings of the Recent Research in the History of Upper Silesia

In this review of the recent research into Upper Silesia, I will focus on collective volumes, as such publications offer a wider survey of research outcomes compared to monographs. The studies in question moreover analyse the history of Upper Silesia in a longer perspective. A total of four books by multiple authors will thus be considered, two of which deal with modernisation processes taking place in the nineteenth and twentieth century<sup>1</sup> whilst the other two focus on temporal caesurae of paramount importance to the region's history: the Great War<sup>2</sup> and the Second World War, the aftermath of the wars, and the collapse of the communist system.<sup>3</sup>

The effects of the defeat of Imperial Germany and of the Habsburg monarchy, the plebiscite, the Silesian Uprisings and the split of the region

<sup>1</sup> Lutz Budraß (ed.), *Industrialisierung und Nationalisierung: Fallstudien zur Geschichte des oberschlesischen Industrierevierts im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Essen, 2013); Sebastian Rosenbaum (ed.), *Górny Śląsk i Górnślązacy: Wokół problemów regionu i jego mieszkańców w XIX i XX wieku* (Katowice and Gliwice, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Linek, Sebastian Rosenbaum, and Joanna Tofilska (eds.), *Wielka Wojna, mały region: Pierwsza wojna światowa w perspektywie górnośląskiej. Szkice i studia* (Katowice, Gliwice, and Opole, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Adam Dziuba and Sebastian Rosenbaum (eds.), *Upadek systemu komunistycznego na Górnym Śląsku: Wokół przemian 1989 roku w województwach katowickim i opolskim* (Katowice, 2010).